

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05 IGA-01 PM-03

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /063 W
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R 131135Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2087

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC POLAD

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CONFIDENTIAL VIENTIANE 0231

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, LA

SUBJECT: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

1. IN THE COURSE OF A TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA TODAY, I RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE RETURN OF REFUGEES TO THE SO-CALLED LIBERATED ZONE. I SAID THAT THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN THE JOINT COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE ACCORDS (JCIA) SEEMED MORE LIKE A PLAN FOR A PRISONER EXCHANGE. REFUGEES WOULD BE TAKEN TO THE BORDER OF THE SO-CALLED LIBERATED ZONE IN VEHICLES PROVIDED BY THE VIENTIANE SIDE AND WOULD THEN BE CARTED OFF IN A COMMUNIST VEHICLES. THE AGREEMENT STATED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JCIA WOULD BE ALLOWED TO VISIT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AREAS BUT I WAS INCLINED TO THINK THAT VARIOUS PRETEXTS WOULD BE FOUND TO BLOCK THESE VISITS. IF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE WAS TO BE GIVEN THESE PEOPLE, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT SOME FOREIGNERS BE ALLOWED ACCESS. THE AGREEMENT JUST SIGNED BY THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE UNHCR PROVIDED FOR SUCH ACCESS AND I HOPED THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD USE HIS INFLUENCE TO FACILITATE THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION.

2. TURNING TO THE U.S. ROLE, I TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT

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THE UNHCR WAS AMPLY SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. AND THAT I INTENDED

TO HAVE USAID TAKE A BACK SEAT IN THIS RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM.
IN MY VIEW THE LACK OF PROVISIONS FOR FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT MEANT
THAT FEW REFUGEES WOULD IN FACT RETURN. NEVERTHELESS I DID NOT
WANT THE U.S. ASSOCIATED WITH THE RETURN OF PEOPLE TO A
BAMBOO MOUSETRAP.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD MY POSITION AND THAT
HE WOULD TAKE STEPS TO ASSURE ACCESS BY UNHCR REPS TO REFUGEES
RETURNING TO PATHET LAO AREAS. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THE
PROBLEM WITH PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG AND WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY RAISE
IT WITH THE CABINET.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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